

YOLO COUNTY CalWORKs COUNTY PLAN ADDENDUM WELFARE-TO-WORK GRANT PROGRAM

As required by AB 382, Yolo County is required to submit an addendum to the CalWORKs County Plan each year that the Welfare-to-Work (WtW) funds are made available in California. This addendum incorporates the last two program years.

Background

Through the Department of Labor, the WtW Grant Program provides grants to states and local communities to create additional job opportunities to individuals who are the hardest to employ. Most individuals served under the WtW Grant Program are linked to receiving CalWORKs assistance. Other individuals that qualify for the WtW Grant Program include youth, aged 18 through 24, who received foster care before turning 18 years of age and custodial parents with income below the federal poverty line.

The Yolo County Department of Employment and Social Services (DESS) operates the 85% Department of Labor WtW Grant. DESS is a merged entity including the Local County Welfare Department and the Local Workforce Investment Area. This merger has resulted in enhanced coordination between CalWORKs Employment Services (CWES), Welfare-to-Work Grant Program and Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

Definitions

The following local definition has been developed to use in determining eligibility to participate in the WtW Grant Program:

- Characteristics associated with, or predictive of, long-term welfare dependence are defined as school dropout, teenage pregnancy (an adult who had a child when she was a teenager), poor work history (has not worked full-time in unsubsidized employment for more than 13 consecutive weeks in the last 12 calendar months), low basic skills (8.9 or below in reading or math test), limited English proficiency (3 or below on QIA), offender or felon (an offender is an individual that has had a prior misdemeanor or felony arrest or conviction), low functioning (ex. IQ score indicating low functioning on assessment, placement in specialized classes), or lack of life coping social skills (examples include but are not limited to poor hygiene, poor attitude, repeated homelessness).

Coordination Of WtW Activities

The Yolo County Department of Employment and Social Services (DESS) provides WtW Grant Program activities and services through its One-Stop Career Centers. The centers are staffed by WIA, WtW, CalWorks Employment Services (CWES) and EDD staff. The centers provide universal access to all job seekers and employers. Referral of WtW participants is made by WIA, WtW, CWES and EDD staff. The WIA and WtW staff, in consultation with CWES staff, conduct the assessment and development of the individual responsibility plan, individual employment plan, or individual service strategy. Case management services are assigned to staff based on the participant's program and training component.

Specific agreements have been developed with Los Rios and Woodland Community Colleges to provide career development classes at DESS's two One-Stop Career Centers. This class provides one unit of college credit. In addition, DESS has an agreement with EDD to co-facilitate job search modules, as well as provide Intensive Services Program to CalWORKs clients. Yolo County continues to be a member of the seven county regional One-Stop Career Center project called the Capital Area Investment Zone. This regional partnership enhances job listings and recruitment efforts to serve businesses and job seekers throughout the seven counties.

DESS staff provided training and information to staff at the local District Attorney's (DA) Family Support Division. Coordination with the DA Family Support Division, includes faxing copies of completed Personal Responsibility Contracts to DA Family Support staff and notifying DA Family Support staff when a non-custodial parent is employed in either subsidized or unsubsidized employment.

The DESS WtW Grant Program does not target specific eligible populations, although program focuses more on those hard to serve, long-term on aid populations.

Coordination Of State WtW Grant Matching Fund Expenditures

WtW Grant matching funds are being used to fund a Domestic Violence Reduction Program, in collaboration with the Yolo County Probation Department, designed to provide services to overcome domestic violence issues that are barriers to employment. A Probation Officer is assigned to work with the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence who also receive CalWORKs. Program participants may also receive services through the WtW grant program as CalWORKs recipients or as non-custodial parents.

Matching funds are also being used to assist in identifying and providing services to Youth, ages 18 – 24, that have exited or are exiting Foster Care and to provide non-medical, drug and alcohol treatment services to WtW Grant program participants.

DESS utilized matching funds, in addition to WIA and CWES funds, to operate the New Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) project. This project was designed to provide services to inmates in the Monroe Detention Center (Yolo County Jail) who are within 30 days of being released. Orientations and initial assessments for activities and services available through the One-Stop Career Centers were provided to inmates in order to reduce the recidivism rate of the inmates. Staff anticipated that non-custodial parents and other potentially eligible WtW participants would be identified through this program. While inmates participated in the services provided at Monroe Detention Center, few accessed services through the One-Stop after their release. Nor were staff able to identify non-custodial parents. Therefore, the NEON project was discontinued in March 2001.

Identification, Eligibility Determination and Referral Mechanisms

Staff providing orientations, initial assessments, eligibility determinations, and other core services and WIA and CWES case managers have been trained in the WtW Grant Program and WtW Grant Program eligibility and are instrumental in identifying, assessing and referring individuals to the WtW Grant Program.

Staff coordinate with Child Protective Services' Independent Living Skills Program, which serves foster care youth, to identify, assess and recruit foster care youth for the WtW grant program.

Staff also coordinates with the Yolo County Probation Department through the Domestic Violence Reduction Program and with the DA Family Support Division.